

Frequently Asked Questions about Artifact Donations

What happens to donated artifacts? Donated artifacts are accessioned into the Museum's permanent collection. This involves cataloging and photographing each artifact and recording it in our Museum database. Artifacts are safely stored in acid-free, archival-quality materials. The Museum's collection is used mainly for research and exhibition. Occasionally, artifacts may be used in travelling exhibits or loaned to other institutions for exhibit.

What paperwork is required for a donation? If you have artifacts that you wish to donate to the museum, please fill out the Artifact Donation form and return it to the Museum. If the Museum chooses to accept your donation, you will be required to drop off the donation and sign a Temporary Custody form. After the donation has been processed, Museum staff will mail you a Deed of Gift form that you must sign and return in the stamped envelope provided.

Will my donation be exhibited? The Museum does not guarantee artifacts will be exhibited. The Museum's collection includes tens of thousands of items and only a small portion is on exhibit at any given time. Photographs and ephemera not on exhibit are generally available to researchers by appointment. Access to other items, such as textiles and large objects, is extremely limited.

If I donate materials to the Renton History Museum, can they be returned to me or my descendants at any time? No. Donors should be prepared to give up their objects, because once accessioned into the collection materials cannot be returned. Donors are required to sign a Deed of Gift that legally transfers ownership to the Museum.

Does the Museum accept long-term loans or donations with conditions attached? The Museum *does not* accept long-term loans. The Museum occasionally accepts short-term loans for the purposes of exhibition or research. Conditional donations *are not* accepted. Collection materials are not placed on permanent display for several reasons. The Museum has a small exhibition space and changes exhibits quite often, so artifacts are rotated on and off exhibit. Permanent display can also harm artifacts with elevated exposure to light and wear and tear.

Will Museum staff provide appraisals of items donated? Museum staff is *unable* to provide appraisals because the IRS deems it a conflict of interest. Please contact one of these associations with regard to appraisals: [Appraisers Association of America](#), or [American Society of Appraisers](#). If you desire an appraisal, you must obtain it prior to donating artifacts.